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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 24 January 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to again draw your attention to the critical human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — the territory that constitutes the State of Palestine — owing to ongoing illegal and brutal practices by Israel, the occupying Power. In tandem with its incessant violation of international humanitarian law, particularly through its insidious campaign of settlement colonization of the Palestinian land, Israel is systematically and grossly violating the human rights of the Palestinian people, in all aspects and on a daily basis.

In the recent period, excessive use of force and brutality by the Israeli occupying forces, such as the use of live ammunition, including against civilian protesters, has resulted in the deaths of several Palestinian civilians, including children, dozens of injuries and suffering for more Palestinian families. Here, we recall the necessity of ensuring the protection of civilian persons in armed conflict and we demand protection for the Palestinian people, whose well-being, safety and lives are under constant threat under Israeli occupation.

This week, the Hanash and Al-Amarin families from the Bethlehem area are mourning losses at the hands of the occupying Power. Saleh Al-Amarin, age 15, died yesterday after being shot in the head by the Israeli occupying forces on 18 January 2013 in Bethlehem when he and several other youths used stones to confront the occupying forces who had raided the area. Lubna Hanash, age 22, from Bethlehem, was murdered by the occupying forces yesterday, 23 January, as she walked with a friend near Al-Arroub College in an area near Al-Khalil. Lubna was shot in the head in broad daylight by Israeli soldiers who fired from a civilian car at her and the woman with whom she was walking, Suad Jaara, age 28. Suad was also shot but survived her injuries. Despite claims by the occupying Power, there were no incidents taking place at the time that this innocent woman's life was so brutally taken. Her killing, like the killing of so many other Palestinian civilians before her,

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is yet another tragic reflection of the widespread disregard for Palestinian life by the Israeli occupying forces, who routinely denigrate the humanity of, and callously brutalize, the Palestinian civilian population living under their occupation and subjugation.

In this regard, also yesterday, a 17-year-old boy, Adnan Hassan, was beaten and cursed at by Israeli soldiers at the Huwwara checkpoint south of Nablus. The boy, from the village of Kafr Qaddum, near Qalqilya, was yelled at by the soldiers as they beat him in retaliation, they said, for the weekly demonstrations that take place in his village against the Wall and the settlements. Such repugnant behaviour by the occupying forces, which is regrettably common, proves yet again the total lack of tolerance by Israel, the occupying Power, for any expressions of peaceful, non-violent protest and resistance to its illegal policies of aggression, colonization and oppression of the Palestinian people.

Further, in this connection I must also convey our serious concerns regarding the plight of the more than 4,500 Palestinian civilians who remain captive in Israeli jails and detention centres. These Palestinians, who include children and women, are being imprisoned in squalid conditions and subjected to all forms of physical and psychological mistreatment, including beatings, humiliation, forced interrogations, threats, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement and other forms of torture. Israel, the occupying Power, also continues its denial of proper medical care, denial of family visits for prisoners and denial of due process of law, as well as its arbitrary detention of hundreds of Palestinians without charge. In protest at such inhumane, illegal treatment by the occupying Power, many Palestinian prisoners and detainees have undertaken hunger strikes. We recall in this regard the massive hunger strike undertaken in the spring of last year.

Today, we draw attention to the grave condition of three prisoners on hunger strike whose well-being and very lives are at stake. Samer Al-Issawi, who has been on hunger strike for 182 days, is in critical condition and suffering from multiple health problems as he continues to protest against his unlawful detention without charge by Israel after his release as part of the prisoner exchange concluded in late 2011. Ayman Sharawna, who had previously undertaken a 162-day hunger strike that left him in a state of compromised health, has resumed his hunger strike, also in protest at his unlawful detention, after he was rearrested by the occupying Power soon after his release as part of the above-mentioned prisoner exchange. Also on hunger strike is Tareq Hussein Awad Qedan, who has been on strike for 52 days, demanding his release so that he can care for his ill son, 4-year-old Khalid, who is suffering from muscular dystrophy, for which lifesaving treatment is unavailable in Palestine, requiring him to travel abroad.

We call for international attention to the plight of these Palestinian prisoners and for pressure to be exerted on Israel, the occupying Power, to release them immediately for the sake of saving their lives and ending the suffering inflicted on them and their families. Moreover, we call for international attention to the plight of all Palestinians, including in particular hundreds of children, who continue to be imprisoned by Israel, the occupying Power. The international community, including all relevant organs of the United Nations, must demand that Israel respect international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in its treatment of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees and allow for international monitoring of their conditions. Moreover, we reiterate our call for the occupying Power to

immediately release all of our prisoners and detainees and to allow for their return to their families and reintegration into their communities.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 451 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 18 January 2013 (A/ES-10/578-S/2013/32), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador, Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations